UPDATE- COVID-19: Feb2021

CDC — Requirement for Face Masks on Public Transportation Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs

Updated Feb. 2, 2021 [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/face-masks-public-transportation.html]

Traveling on public transportation increases a person's risk of getting and spreading COVID-19 by bringing people in close contact with others, often for prolonged periods, and exposing them to frequently touched surfaces. Air travel often requires spending time in security lines and busy airport terminals. Travel by bus, train, and other conveyances used for international, interstate, or intrastate transportation poses similar challenges. Staying 6 feet away from others is often difficult on public transportation. People may not be able to distance themselves by the recommended 6 feet from other people seated nearby or from those standing in or passing through the aisles on airplanes, trains, or buses.

Travel has led—and continues to lead to—interstate and international spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. Wearing masks that completely cover the mouth and nose reduce the spread of COVID-19. People who never develop symptoms (asymptomatic) or are not yet showing symptoms (pre-symptomatic) might not know that they are infected but can still spread COVID-19 to others. Masks also offer protection to the wearer.

CDC has issued an order that requires face masks to be worn by all travelers while on public transportation (which includes all passengers and all personnel operating conveyances). People must wear masks that completely cover both the mouth and nose while awaiting, boarding, disembarking, or traveling on airplanes, ships, ferries, trains, subways, buses, taxis, and ride-shares as they are traveling into, within, or out of the United States and U.S. territories. People must also wear masks while at transportation hubs (e.g., airports, bus or ferry terminals, train and subway stations, seaports) and other locations where people board public transportation in the United States and U.S. territories.

Operators of public conveyances and transportation hubs must use best efforts to ensure that any person on the conveyance wears a mask when boarding, disembarking, and for the duration of travel or while entering or on the premises of the transportation hub. Depending on the circumstances, operators must take the following actions:
Board/allow entry only people who wear masks;

- instruct people that wearing a mask on the conveyance/premises is a requirement of federal law and that not complying with the requirement is a violation of federal law;
- monitor the conveyance/premises for any person who is not wearing a mask and seek compliance from such a person;
- at the earliest safe opportunity, disembark/remove from premises any person who refuses to comply; and
- notify people of the requirement to make sure they aware of and comply with the requirement to wear a mask. Examples of such notifications are messaging in apps, on websites or through email; posters in multiple languages with illustrations; and printing the information on tickets.

People are not required to wear a mask under the following circumstances:

- while eating, drinking, or taking medication for brief periods of time;
- while communicating, for brief periods of time, with a person who is hearing impaired when the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication;
- if, on an aircraft, wearing of oxygen masks is needed because of loss of cabin pressure or other event affecting aircraft ventilation;
- if unconscious (for reasons other than sleeping), incapacitated, unable to be awakened, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance; or
- when necessary to temporarily remove the mask to verify one's identity such as during Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screening or when asked to do so by the ticket or gate agent or any law enforcement official.
The following categories of people are exempt from the requirement to wear a mask:
- A child under the age of 2 years;
- A person with a disability who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, for reasons related to the disability;
- A person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by the relevant workplace safety guidelines or federal regulations.

People on board the following categories of conveyances are exempt from the requirement to wear a mask:

- Private conveyances operated only for personal, non-commercial use;
- Commercial motor vehicles or trucks, if the driver is the only person in the vehicle or truck;
Conveyances operated by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) as long as the operator of the conveyance follows all DOD requirements to prevent spread of COVID-19. ◊

For more information and FAQ's follow the link to the CDC website: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/face-masks-public-transportation.html

OSHA Finally Releases Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing COVID-19 in the Workplace — (The National Law Review, Feb. 5, 2021)

On January 29, 2021, and in accordance with President Biden's Executive Order on Protecting Worker Health and Safety, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued guidance focused on mitigating and preventing the spread of COVID-19 in workplaces outside of the healthcare industry. The guidance does not expressly create any new legal obligations for employers, but instead outlines OSHA's perspective as to best practices. The guidance also reminds employers that they already have enforceable obligations under existing federal regulations, including the obligation to provide a workplace free from recognized hazards such as COVID-19.

OSHA's guidance encourages employers to implement a COVID-19 prevention program as the most effective way to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The guidance emphasizes employee involvement, communication and training as best practices.

Per OSHA, important components of a COVID-19 prevention program include:

1. Assigning a workplace coordinator responsible for COVID-19 plan implementation.
2. Conducting a hazard assessment to identify potential COVID-19 workplace hazards.
3. Implementing measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, including requiring employees who are sick, have symptoms or who are exposed to stay or go home and to quarantine or isolate as recommended by the CDC; implementing physical distancing; using face coverings and other personal protective equipment; improving ventilation; encouraging good hygiene; and performing routine cleaning and disinfection regularly, with enhanced cleaning and disinfection after a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case.
4. Protecting workers at higher risk for severe illness, including by providing reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities, as may be required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.
5. Encouraging employees to report COVID-19 symptoms, exposure and COVID-19 hazards in the workplace.
6. Educating and training workers, contractors and facility visitors on COVID-19 policies and infection mitigation procedures.
7. Minimizing the impact of required quarantines on employees through telework and/or use of available paid leave.
8. Providing screening and testing in the workplace.
9. Following OSHA's recording and reporting regulations as applied to COVID-19 illnesses and injuries. COVID-19 infections can be OSHA-log recordable under. existing regulations as explained in OSHA's Revised Enforcement Guidance for Recording Cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), and COVID– 19 fatalities and hospitalizations may need to be rapidly reported to OSHA directly, as explained at OSHA Reporting FAQs.
10. Protecting employees from retaliation when they assert rights under OSHA to advocate for their health and safety, consistent with Section 11(c) of the OSH Act.
11. Making COVID-19 vaccines available at no cost to employees and providing information and training on the benefits of vaccines.
12. Ensuring that workers continue to wear face coverings, physically distance and take other appropriate precautions even after vaccination.
13. Continuing to follow other OSHA requirements, including standards requiring PPE, sanitation and employee access to medical and exposure records.

OSHA's guidance may foreshadow future mandatory standards requiring employers to implement a COVID-19 prevention program. President Biden has ordered OSHA to consider whether enforceable federal standards are necessary and, if so, to issue those standards by March 15, 2021. For now, however, all employers are encouraged to evaluate whether their current COVID-19 policies and plans are consistent with OSHA's guidance, and update as appropriate, including to comply with state and local laws or guidance regarding COVID-19 mitigation measures.

Please contact National Safety Consulting if you need assistance updating or adding the Infectious Disease program to your current Safety Manual at 636-532-2999 ◇

Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination (CDC — Updated Jan. 26, 2021)

Q. If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine?
A. Yes. Due to severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that reinfection with COVID-19 is possible, you should be vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19 infection. If you were treated for COVID-19 symptoms with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, you should wait 90 days before getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

Q. Will I be required to get vaccinated for work?
A. The federal government does not mandate vaccination for individuals. For some healthcare workers or essential employees, a state or local government or employer, for example, may require or mandate that workers be vaccinated as a matter of state or other law. Check with your employer to see if they have any rules that apply to you.

Q. Do I need to wear a mask and avoid close contact with others if I have gotten 2 doses of the vaccine?
A. Yes. Not enough information is currently available to say if or when CDC will stop recommending that people wear masks and avoid close contact with others to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (KMOV.com) -- The State of Missouri announced the launch of the Missouri's Vaccine Navigator, a tool to help Missourians to register to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

The **Missouri Vaccine Navigator** helps residents who to wish to receive the vaccine, get registered. They can then complete a questionnaire which will determine their eligibility "Although vaccine supply nationwide is still quite limited, this registration process will help connect Missourians with more avenues to receive a vaccine," Governor Parson said. "This will not only provide support for Missouri citizens but also help our team determine where the greatest demands for vaccines exist throughout the state." Those who registered will be notified upon the activation of each when they become eligible. The vaccine navigator will also remind registrants when it is time to schedule their second dose .◊

ST. LOUIS COUNTY, Mo. — St. Louis County may have to pause this week's scheduled vaccinations due to lack of supply from the state. (KSDK- Feb. 9, 2021)

According to a press release from St. Louis County Executive Sam Page's spokesperson, the county is entering its third week without a new supply from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. The state previously announced it would provide weekly supplies of the vaccine.

St. Louis County continues to be uncertain when and whether it will receive vaccine doses." Page said, "This makes it incredibly difficult to plan a distribution network and effectively communicate with those who have signed up and are anxiously awaiting an appointment."

More importantly, " Page added, "it puts at further risk the population DPH services serves, including people who are uninsured or underinsured, people who do not have a primary care physician, and others who are uniquely at risk and vulnerable to COVID-19. Many of the people who need the vaccine the most simply will not have access to the vaccine."

St. Louis County's health department expanded its vaccination operation last week and opened four additional sites for a total of five. St. Louis County offers vaccinations at John C. Murphy Health Center in Berkeley, the Florissant Valley campus of ST. Louis Community College in Ferguson and the fire districts in Affton, Eureka and Mehlville.

Unfortunately, we have not received any vaccine from the state the past two weeks and the county found out this morning it will not receive any vaccine from the state this week." spokesperson Doug Moore said in an email.

The following message comes up on the state's COVID-19 vaccine map locator: "The state of Missouri is still experiencing an exceptionally limited supply of COVID-19 vaccines. Before contacting a vaccinator on this map to coordinate your vaccination, please understand that many vaccinators are still awaiting supplies from the federal government."◊

Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination (continued)

Q. **Is there a risk of a severe allergic reaction if I receive the vaccine?**
A.   Serious problems from vaccination can happen, but they are rare. CDC has learned of reports that some people have experienced severe allergic reactions—also know as anaphylaxis—after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. As an example, an allergic reation is considered severe when a person needs to be treated with epinephrine or Epi Pen or if they must go to the hospital.Learn more about COVID-19 vaccines and allergies.

Q. Which lasts longer, Immunity after getting COVID-19 or protection from COVID-19 vaccines?
A.   The protection someone gains from having an infection (called "natural immunity") varies depending on the disease, and it varies from person to person. Because this virus is new, we don't know how long natural immunity might last. Current evidence suggests that getting the virus again (reinfection) is uncommon in the 90 days after the first infection with the virus that causes COVID-19. We won't know how long immunity lasts after vaccination until we have more data on how well COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world conditions.

Helpful Links:

CDC Requirement for Face Masks on Public Transportation Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/face-masks-public-transportation.html
CDC Testing in Non-Healthcare Workplaces https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/testing-non-healthcare-workplaces.html
CDC Contact Tracing in Non-Healthcare Workplaceshttps://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/contact-tracing- nonhealthcare-workplaces.html
OSHA Finally Releases Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing COVID-19 in the Workplace https://www.natlawreview.com/article/osha-finally-releases-guidance-mitigating-and-preventing-covid-19-workplace?amp
Vaccinations in the Workplace https://www.natlawreview.com/article/vaccinations-workplace
 St. Louis County says it may have to pause vaccinations this week due to supply from state https://www.ksdk.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/vaccine/st-louis-county-covid19-vaccine-supply/63-c64dc4ba-481f-4e67-91f1-81c7c9222d5b
FAQ's about COVID-19 Vaccination https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html